

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, June 25,  
1782. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,  
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,  
1900-1910.**

**TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.<sup>1</sup>**

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, June 25, 1782.

Dear Sir, —Your favor of the fifteenth, being more fortunate than the preceding one, came safe to hand yesterday. The loss of the mail is the more provoking, as it is said to have contained a packet from New York, which had been intercepted on its passage to England and carried to North Carolina.

The illicit trade with the British lines has been pushed so far, under the encouragement of the enemy, as to threaten a deep wound to our finances. Congress have renewed the exhortation to the States on this subject, and recommended to the people, through them, a patriotic co-operation with the public measures. This trade, we have also discovered, is carried on with considerable effect, under collusive captures. This branch of the iniquity falls properly within the purview of Congress, and an ordinance for its excision is in the hands of a committee.

A letter from Mr. Adams, of the eleventh of April, informs his correspondent that five of the seven provinces had decided in favor of a treaty with the United States, and that the concurrence of the remaining two might be expected in a few days. A Leyden paper, of a subsequent date, reduces the exception to a single province. It would seem, from a

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memorial from the merchants to the States General, that this resolution had been greatly stimulated by an apprehension that a sudden pacification might exclude their commerce from some of the advantages which England may obtain.

The memorial appeals to the effect of the American trade on the resources of France, and to the short and indirect experience of it, which Holland enjoyed before the loss of St. Eustatia, as proof of its immense consequence. It observes, also, that the ordinance of Congress against British manufactures presented a precious crisis for introducing those of other nations; which ought to be rather embraced, as nothing would be so likely to dispose Britain to the independence of America and a general peace, as the prospect of her being supplanted in the commercial preference expected from the habits of her lost provinces.

The present conjecture with regard to the fleet mentioned in my late letters, is, that it conveyed a parcel of miserable refugees, who are destined to exchange the fancied confiscations of their rebellious countrymen, for a cold and barren settlement in Nova Scotia or Penobscot.